

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL Claims 38 and 41-45 without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein.

1-25. (Cancelled).

26. (Previously Presented) An image forming method comprising the steps of: applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto an intermediate transfer body having a surface to which a hydrophilic treatment, where energy is applied to the surface, has been performed;

forming an image by ejecting ink from an ink jet head onto the intermediate transfer body on which the liquid has been applied; and

transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body to a recording medium.

27. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface of the intermediate transfer body contains at least one of a fluorine compound and a silicone compound.

28. (Withdrawn) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the surface of the intermediate transfer body is formed of an elastic material with a hardness of between 10 and 100 degrees.

29. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the hydrophilic treatment comprises plasma processing.

30-31. (Cancelled).

32. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, wherein the liquid contains metal ions as a component for coagulating the colorant.

33. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of applying a wettability improving liquid, for improving the wettability of the surface of the intermediate transfer body, prior to applying the liquid.

34. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of promoting a removal of water from the ink on the intermediate transfer body prior to transferring the image to the recording medium.

35. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to claim 26, further comprising a step of cleaning the surface of the intermediate transfer body.

36. (Previously Presented) An image forming method comprising the steps of:  
performing plasma processing to a surface of an intermediate transfer body to make the surface hydrophilic;

applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto the intermediate transfer body having the surface to which the plasma processing has been performed; forming an image by ejecting ink from an ink jet head onto the intermediate transfer body on which the liquid has been applied; and transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body to a recording medium.

37. (Previously Presented) An image forming method comprising the steps of: performing plasma processing to a surface of an intermediate transfer body, the surface containing at least one of fluororubber and silicone rubber, to make the surface hydrophilic; applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto the intermediate transfer body having the surface to which the plasma processing has been performed; forming an image by ejecting ink from an ink jet head onto the intermediate transfer body on which the liquid has been applied; and transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body to a recording medium.

38. (Cancelled).

39. (Previously Presented) An image forming method comprising the steps of: applying a liquid, for coagulating a colorant of ink, onto an intermediate transfer body to which a hydrophilic treatment by plasma processing has been performed; forming an image by ejecting ink from an ink jet head onto the intermediate transfer body on which the liquid has been applied; and transferring the image formed on the intermediate transfer body to a recording medium.

40. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to Claim 39, wherein the surface contains at least one of fluororubber and silicone rubber.

41-45. (Cancelled).

46. (Previously Presented) An image forming method according to Claim 26, further comprising a step of performing the hydrophilic treatment to the surface of the intermediate transfer body.